

Level have been standardised. What does it mean? What is the maximum tenure for which one can be appointed? I would also like to know whether some of them have been re-employed on tenure basis. If so, how many of them have been re-employed and for how many years?

SHRI MURLI DEORA: Sir, these jobs are not like temporary jobs of six months and three months. These are almost *pucca* jobs for four years and this period is extendable. Most of them get extended for the next four years, sometimes again for the next four years, which means, almost for a period of 12 years. And, emoluments and compensations, which they get, are almost equal to those of permanent jobs. So, there is no complaint on that.

Emergency landing of AI aircrafts

*285. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:††
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last ten months, four Air India aircrafts suffered damage like tyre burst, malfunctioning of weather radar or aircraft engine, which forced the pilots to make emergency landings in Mumbai-Delhi, thus causing unnecessary tension amongst passengers and Air India suffering a huge financial loss thereby;

(b) if so, the reasons for malfunctioning of weather radar, engines, etc. since rigid pre-take off tests are always enforced; and

(c) what steps have been taken to ensure that such situations do not recur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) During the last 10 months, there were 5 incidents involving Air India aircraft associated with defects like tyre burst, malfunctioning of weather radar or aircraft engine at Mumbai and Delhi.

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Syeda Anwara Taimur.

(b) and (c) Air India airplanes are maintained under the Continued Airworthiness Programme. All the tasks are carried out as required by Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs such as Boeing, Airbus, General Electric, Pratt & Whitney etc.) Maintenance Planning Document (MPD) and schedules approved by Regulatory Authority (DGCA). Before Maintenance Personnel are allowed to work on airplane, they undergo very stringent classroom training, familiarization, which takes minimum 3 years. Thereafter, all maintenance personnel undergo a type rating classroom training followed by practical on the job training before conducting an oral cum practical examination by the Regulatory Body (DGCA). Thereafter, the appropriate Licences/Approvals are issued to them by Regulatory Body (DGCA), which authorizes them to work on a particular type of Airplane/Engine/Components. The infrastructure used by Air India is as per recommendations made by Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs).

Air India, like other airlines, is under continuous surveillance not only by the DGCA, India but also from International regulatory bodies such as Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of USA, European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) of European Union, Transport Canada, ICAO, COSCAP, etc. Air India's maintenance organization has always met their requirements and stood to their stringent tests.

Despite strict adherence to and compliance of the maintenance schedules and regulatory requirements, technical snags, defects and system failures are experienced by the airline industry including Air India, due to various reasons, such as the operating environment, ageing effect of the fleet, etc., the occurrence of which are not predictable and hence cannot be entirely prevented.

SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Sir, I am happy to see the detailed reply given by the hon. Minister. But, in his reply, he has stated that during the last 10 months, there were five incidents involving Air India aircraft associated with defects like tyre burst, malfunctioning of weather radar or aircraft engine. He has also stated that ageing effect of the fleet could be the reason for technical snags and other defects. I would like to know what the age of an aircraft is. In other words, after how many years of operations is an old aircraft replaced by new one.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: It is true that there are malfunctions in some of the aircrafts. But that could happen even on the newer aircraft and at any age of the aircraft. But the fact is that an older fleet tend to give rise to more engineering issues, from time to time. As long as any aircraft is flying in the Indian skies or, for that matter, anywhere in the world, it has to be airworthy. An age of an aircraft has nothing to do with the airworthiness of an aircraft. However, an attempt is always made(Interruptions) I have said that. However, an older aircraft does tend to have more technical issues; like in case of any old equipment, an older car or an old scooter, the same thing applies to an aircraft. But an aircraft, as long as it is flying, has to be airworthy. The age has no relevance to that.

SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Sir, the aircraft are very much delayed while landing at airports because of want of space. This is happening because the private aircraft are increasing in number. What steps the Government is taking in this connection? Also kindly say whether preference will be given to landing of Indian Airlines aircraft in this respect.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: This supplementary does not arise out of the main question. We are going off on a tangent.

श्री विजय जे० दर्डा: सर, माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने अपने उत्तर में कहा है कि एअर इंडिया विमानों के आपातकालीन स्थितियों में उतरने का मुख्य कारण विमानों का पुराना होना है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि वर्तमान में एअर इंडिया द्वारा संचालित विमानों की उम्र क्या है और ये कितने पुराने हैं? मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूं कि समान प्रकार के विदेशी विमानों की तुलना में भारतीय विमानों की उम्र क्या है, इन में से कितने विमान आप ने लीज पर लिए हैं और कितनों पर एअर इंडिया का स्वामित्व है?

श्री प्रफुल्ल पटेल: सर, हर हवाई जहाज के बारे में इन्होंने जो पूछा है, वह मैं माननीय सदस्य को लिखित में जरूर भेज दूंगा। हालांकि हर हवाई जहाज की उम्र मेरे पास लिखी हुई है, लेकिन यहां पर सदन का समय जाएगा। एक बात निश्चित है कि हमारे यहां इसमें विशेषकर एअर इंडिया और इंडियन एअरलाइन्स के हवाई जहाजों के मामले में बहुत वर्षों तक निर्णय नहीं लिया गया था, कई सरकारें आईं और गईं, लेकिन इस सरकार में हमारे प्रधानमंत्री जी ने विशेषकर के इस मामले में ध्यान दिया कि एअर इंडिया और इंडियन एअरलाइन्स, जो हमारी दोनों पब्लिक सेक्टर कंपनियां हैं, इनको हमें मजबूत करना है, इनका भविष्य सुरक्षित रखना है और इसीलिए अनेक वर्षों के बाद अब इन दोनों हवाई कंपनियों के लिए नए हवाई जहाज लेने का एक कार्यक्रम शुरू हुआ है। मुझे विश्वास है कि अगले वर्ष 2007 से इसमें नए हवाई जहाजों के आने की मात्रा बढ़ेगी, क्योंकि ऑर्डर

देने के पश्चात् भी एक-डेढ़ साल लगता है, माननीय सभापति जी। तो इन हवाई जहाजों के आने के ऑर्डर की प्रक्रिया शुरू हुई है, लेकिन एक बात मैं आपको कहना चाहूंगा कि जहां तक लीज पर जो हवाई जहाज लेते हैं या बाहर से कोई हवाई जहाज इम्पोर्ट होता है, तो उसमें हमने यह कोशिश की है कि 15 साल से कम उम्र के हवाई जहाजों को ही इम्पोर्ट की परमिशन दी जाती है, ताकि कहीं ऐसा न हो कि सारे पुराने हवाई जहाज हमारे भारतीय हवाई क्षेत्र में उड़ान भरते रहें।

श्री विजय जे० दडा: सर, मंत्री जी ने इसमें यह नहीं बताया।

श्री सभापति: नहीं, आपका क्वेश्चन हो गया।

श्री विजय जे० दडा: सर, मेरा एक हुआ है, मेरा दूसरा सप्लीमेंटरी।

श्री सभापति: एक क्वेश्चन, जो आपका हो गया।

श्री विजय जे० दडा: सर, एक का जवाब नहीं आया, मैं जवाब जानना चाहूंगा।

श्री सभापति: नहीं, आप दूसरी जगह उस पर बात कर लीजिए। यह क्वेश्चन मैं नहीं होगा।

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, ten years back, passengers travelling abroad preferred Air India to other airlines. Now, they are travelling by Air India as the last resort. The reason is the poor maintenance of aircraft. When a passenger goes to airport, he doesn't know when the flight will take off and when it will land. That is the situation. The hon. Minister was talking about the ageing fleet, operating requirements and so on. But, Sir, maintenance is very important, so far as Air India is concerned. Air India is running into losses. The hon. Minister had mentioned this earlier. The maintenance of our aircraft is very poor when compared to that of other airlines, whether it is Air France, British Airways or Lufthansa. That is the reason why we are running into losses. Bringing new aircraft is a different thing. Even Indian Airlines is getting aircraft on lease from other places. Why don't you consider, in the interregnum, getting better aircraft, so as to be able to compete with other airlines and earn profit?

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, it is a very long question, a question which has many a facet to it. All I can say is, first and foremost, let us be clear about one thing; any aircraft, whether it is of Air India or any other airlines, safety is of paramount concern. Therefore, no aircraft is allowed to fly unless it is certified to be absolutely airworthy by the DGCA. I would also like to state that in spite of the issues of Air India—maintenance and other issues—which are being highlighted sometimes by the media, the

maintenance standards of Air India and Indian Airlines are second to none anywhere in the world. So, please, do not say this. And I would urge all Members of Parliament that we all, on the one side, in this House or on any platform, want our national carriers to be stronger, better and we all want to patronise them which is fine, but, on the other, you must also support them. You must understand the problem which they have gone through.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: We are supporting you. But we want you to strengthen them.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: They did not get a level-playing field. All the new, private carriers, all the international carriers, came with new fleet, new capacity, added capacity, and we were constrained, with our hands tied. So, at some stage, you must also appreciate the role they have played. And then, give them some time to stabilise. The Government is doing everything possible and we are committed to make it a good and strong national carrier.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, if we give them time, the time will run out.

SHRIMATI JAYABACHCHAN: Sir, I would like to say to the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, that the perception is more important today. The perception amongst the people of this country about our national carriers is very, very low, very very poor. With a Cabinet Minister like you, instead of just changing the name to 'Indian', what are you doing about the promotional aspect and about changing the perception in the minds of the people? I am not talking about the people sitting in this House, but I am talking about the rest of the country. Today, a person prefers a private airline for flying, including Members of Parliament here, to the Indian Airlines.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: No timings are maintained.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: Sir, the hon. Member has definitely stated that yes there is a choice now available. So, the people do exercise that choice.

SHRIMATI JAYABACHCHAN: It is not choice, Sir. It is the perception I am talking about.

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: I am going to answer what you have asked.

Yes, there is a choice available. So, people do exercise that choice and sometimes that choice is in favour of not the public carrier, but...

SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Their choice is judicious.
...(Interruptions)...

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: But, I can assure you, Jayaji that the Indian Airlines is not, mind you, the branding and the name, nothing has changed. It is only a perception that we have changed everything. No, nothing. The Indian and the Indian Airlines is one and the same. It is only on the aircraft, it is a kind of a branding. We cannot go into all those issues, sitting in Parliament. Everything is done by the companies, and let them do what they have to do. We should not be deciding what branding they want. But the fact is that yes there are things which need to be done to make it even better. Nobody is denying that there is a scope for correction and doing better. I appreciate the sentiments with which you have raised this issue. But I can also tell you that I also get the sheet of performance and passengers carried by all the carriers, including the Indian Airlines, and it is not as bad as we make it out to be that people do not want to fly by Indian Airlines, and they want to fly by any other airline. But I can also tell you...(Interruptions)...I have accepted that this is an area of concern and there is a scope for improvement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next Question...(Interruptions)...

श्रीमती जया बच्चन: सर, मंत्री जी ने मेरे सवाल का सही जवाब नहीं दिया है और उन्होंने अपने वर्ड्स में उलझा कर रख दिया। मैं यह पूछना चाह रही थी कि परसैप्शन हटाने के लिए आप क्या रहे हैं?

*286. [The questioner(s) SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA and PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA were absent. For answer *vide* page 34 *infra*.]

Filling up of vacancies in IA in Chennai

*287. SHRI SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: